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THE RED CROSS

IN CHARGE OF

JANE A. DELANO, R.N.

Chairman of the National Committee on Red Cross Nursing Service

AMERICAN RED CROSS TOWN AND COUNTRY NURSING SERVICE

BY FANNIE F. CLEMENT, R.N.

To meet the obvious need for visiting nursing in communities not reached by the large city nursing associations, the American Red Cross has organized the Town and Country Nursing Service. The direct responsibility for this branch of Red Cross work has been delegated by the National Relief Board of the American Red Cross to a special committee.

The Town and Country Nursing Service is a group of selected visiting nurses appointed by the Red Cross for continuous service in towns and country districts of the United States and to whom the Red Cross lends support in their nursing activities. Red Cross visiting nurses are assigned to duty only in communities where a local nursing committee or organization, public or private, which is affiliated with the Red Cross, assumes responsibility for the work of the nurse, as well as for her salary. A nursing organization thus affiliated, has agreed to certain other regulations as to organization and administration deemed advisable to insure the best interests of the nurse, the local organization and the community at large.

In order to maintain a uniform standard, Red Cross visiting nurses are under the general supervision of the superintendent or authorized supervisors responsible to her. This does not, however, interfere with their responsibility to the committee or organization under which their local work is conducted.

REQUIREMENTS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE TOWN AND COUNTRY NURSING SERVICE

Hospital Training. An applicant must have had at least a two-years' course of training in a general hospital including the care of men and with a daily average of at least fifty patients during the applicants' training. Where there is deficiency of training, subsequent hospital experience or post-graduate work, with the approval of the committee in charge, may be considered an equivalent.

Graduates of state hospitals for the insane, to be considered for appointment, must have had at least nine months' training in a general hospital, either during their course of training or subsequently thereto.

Registration. In States where registration is provided for by law, an applicant must be registered.

Special Training. In addition to these requirements, which are uniform with those for enrollment as Red Cross nurses, an applicant must have had training or experience in visiting nursing or some other form of social service.

Arrangements have been made with certain visiting nursing associations and educational institutions to accept as students for a four months' course those nurses who wish to prepare for this service and who though otherwise eligible, have had not training or experience in visiting nursing. It is expected that their preparation will include at least one month with a rural nurse in order that she may come in direct contact with rural social problems before assuming responsibility in a community of her own.

Teachers College in conjunction with Henry Street Settlement, the New York City Department of Health and the Northern Westchester District Nursing Association, has provided a four months' course for Red Cross visiting nurses which includes lectures and class instruction relating to social problems of rural life. Details of this course and others for preparation for Red Cross visiting nursing will be furnished upon request.

There is a conspicuous demand for visiting nurses who have taken advantage of the eight months' courses in social work open to graduate nurses in Teachers College Department of Nursing and Health, the New York School of Philanthropy, the Boston Instructive District Nursing Association in affiliation with the Boston School for Social Workers, the Visiting Nurse Society of Philadelphia in affiliation with Phipps Institute, the Cleveland Visiting Nurse Association in affiliation with the Western Reserve University, the School of Philanthropy in Chicago and the School for Social Economy in St. Louis.

Indorsements. An applicant must be a member of an organization affiliated with the American Nurses' Association and receive the indorsement of this organization, the training school from which she was graduated and the nursing organizations or institutions where special training or experience in public health nursing or social work was obtained.

Where circumstances seem to warrant, exceptions to the above requirements will be made with the approval of the committee in charge.

LOANS

A loan fund is available for eligible nurses who wish to utilize it during a preparatory course.

APPOINTMENT CARD AND PENDANT

A Red Cross visiting nurse will be given an appointment card and will be furnished with a Red Cross pendant, which is to remain in her possession as long as she may be connected with the service, and is to be worn only while she is in the regulation uniform of a Red Cross visiting nurse. This pendant, as also the appointment card, is to be returned when her connection with the Town and Country Nursing Service has ceased.

ASSIGNMENT TO POSITIONS

Whenever possible, option will be granted nurses as to the locality in which they will work. Although the assignment as well as dismissal of Red Cross visiting nurses is made by the Red Cross, whether they retain their positions or not, depends upon the recommendations of the affiliated organizations by which they are employed and to which they are directly responsible.

Any nurse assigned to a community may leave during the first three months, but after that time she is expected to remain throughout the year except in case of serious illness or other justifiable cause, or unless the local committee or organization wishes to make a change. Any time after the first three months if she desires to be relieved from duty or to be transferred to another locality, she is expected to notify the Red Cross at least two months in advance.

An affiliated organization when wishing to make a change in nurses is expected to notify the Red Cross and the nurse one month in advance.

DUTIES

Red Cross visiting nurses are expected to take an interest in the general welfare of their patients and as far as possible to improve the environment of families which they visit. They should be ready to coöperate with public officials and aid in private endeavors to serve the community as a whole as well as the individual patient. They have opportunity to take the initiative in various branches of public health work. Where agencies for community service do not exist, Red Cross visiting nurses are often called upon to assist in their organization.

A knowledge of driving and riding horses, and sometimes the use of a bicycle, is necessary in some communities.

Nurses are expected to provide themselves with aprons, uniforms, hats and coats of a pattern prescribed for Red Cross visiting nurses, which they shall wear when on duty. Patterns for regulation uniform and apron will be furnished by the Red Cross. A fully equipped bag is usually provided for their use by their nursing association.

HOURS OF DUTY

It is not expected that under ordinary circumstances Red Cross visiting nurses will be called upon for night duty, but in cases of emergency where this is necessary, provision is usually made by the nursing organization for the care of patients during the day. On Sundays and holidays they will visit only such cases as require special or immediate attention. Where local conditions warrant, arrangements are often made between the nurse and her committee for a half day off duty each week, and for any further provision for rest or recreation that may appear necessary.

VACATIONS

Red Cross visiting nurses receive thirty days' vacation annually with pay. This vacation is to be devoted to rest.

SALARIES

The salaries of Red Cross visiting nurses range from \$60 a month upward, varying according to local conditions and the experience of the nurse engaged. It is the aim of the Red Cross to place nurses who are well qualified for their work where they will receive suitable financial recognition. Payment of an annual increase in salary is recommended by the Red Cross to the community employing a visiting nurse, in order to maintain an efficient and permanent staff.

It is the far-reaching purpose of the Red Cross to secure the most efficient and devoted visiting nurses for community service in towns and rural districts where great opportunities for educational and humanitarian work abound. Touching as it does almost every phase of human interest and including every member of the community, no other field of service presents broader opportunities to experienced visiting nurses, to enrolled Red Cross nurses, to private duty nurses or undergraduates whose choice has not yet been made. This work should appeal particularly to those who enjoy life in the open country, who are in sympathy with country people and are ready to help meet their needs.

Further information concerning courses, loans, etc., will be furnished upon application to the Superintendent, Red Cross Town and Country Nursing Service, 705 Union Trust Building, Washington, D. C.